

Mercury Switch Recycling Program FAQs

How is this program funded?

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources received an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Great Lakes grant to cover set-up and recycling costs for mercury switches through June 20, 2005.

What if I collected mercury switches that can't be turned-in to a collection facility by June 20th, 2005?

Please contact Mark Harings at (715) 831-3263, mark.harings@dnr.state.wi.us, for the ongoing approach to the mercury-recycling program.

How much mercury is in a switch?

A single switch averages 1 gram of mercury, the amount in a single fever thermometer. One gram of mercury deposited in a 20-acre lake each year from the atmosphere, can, over time, contaminate the fish in that lake.

Do all vehicles contain mercury switches?

No, Toyotas and Hondas do not use mercury-containing switches in their convenience lighting. U.S. automobile manufacturers phased out mercury switches in model year 2002.

How do I know if a vehicle contains mercury switches?

Lists of vehicles containing mercury switches can be found on the Web, but experience has shown that trying to compare a vehicle year, make and model to reference lists requires too much time and often provides inaccurate data. The quickest and most reliable way to is to inspect the hood and trunk lids of all vehicles.

What tools do I need?

Usually, just a screwdriver or pry bar, small socket wrench, and a pair of wire cutters.

How long will it take to find and remove a mercury-containing switch?

Examining the vehicle and locating and removing a switch averages less than five minutes.

Is it safe to handle the switch and mercury capsule?

As long as the mercury capsule is undamaged, the mercury remains contained and harmless. As a safety precaution, be sure to keep a mercury spill kit available at all times.